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NEWS RELEASE

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NEW "POST" LAW REPEALS, REPLACES DO NOT RESUSCITATE LAW IN IDAHO

A new law that goes into effect July 1 allows Idaho residents to communicate their advance health care directives to various health care providers with one document.

The new Idaho Physician Orders for Scope of Treatment (POST) form includes Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) orders as well as other advance directives related to life-sustaining treatment, according to the Idaho Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Bureau.

"The POST is important because it provides people with an easy way to make their vital health care wishes known in advance of an emergency," says Wayne Denny, EMS Standards & Compliance Section Manager. "It also gives a person a reasonable degree of assurance that their health care wishes will be honored regardless of where they may find themselves in the health care system."

The new POST form will replace Comfort ONE/Do Not Resuscitate as Idaho's DNR order. Under the previous law, the Comfort ONE/DNR order applied to Emergency Medical Services personnel, with separate Do Not Resuscitate orders often required for each medical facility that might render care. The new POST law stipulates that all health care providers in all settings must honor this standardized POST form.

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An Idaho POST is portable, meaning that it transfers with the patient from one facility to another or from home care to ambulance to hospital or other residential facility or hospice. The form includes sections on:

- A. The patient's desire to either be resuscitated or not if the patient should be in cardiopulmonary arrest (no pulse and/or not breathing).
- B. The patient's wishes for the level of additional interventions that he/she will receive. The choices range from very limited comfort measures to aggressive interventions.
- C. Whether the patient desires or declines artificial fluids and nutrition and/or antibiotics and blood products.
- D. The patient can make known the existence of other advance directives such as a living will, durable power of attorney and/or durable power of attorney for health care.

A POST form is appropriate in cases where a patient has an incurable or irreversible injury, disease or condition, or is in a persistent vegetative state. The POST form is also appropriate for a patient who may anticipate such conditions in the future. Forms are available from the patient's physician, who must sign the form and can provide an identification wristband for those who elect a Do Not Resuscitate directive.

Although not required, a patient's POST form may be registered in Idaho's new Health Care Directive Registry maintained by the Idaho Secretary of State. This allows health care providers to confirm the existence of a POST, along with living wills and durable power of attorney for health care, by using the patient's wallet card to access advance directives on file.

While the new POST law repeals and replaces Idaho's former law concerning Do Not Resuscitate orders, a Comfort ONE/DNR order is still valid if it was signed before July 1, 2007. Along with living wills and durable power of attorney for health care, POST forms can be revoked at any time by the patient by expressing this intent verbally, in writing or by destroying the document.

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The Idaho Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Bureau has posted a list of Frequently Asked Questions for patients and for health care providers/EMS personnel on their web site (www.idahoems.org). “The EMS Bureau is a natural choice as the lead on POST education because the first health care provider that will encounter a POST form is likely to be an Emergency Medical Technician or Paramedic,” Denny says.

The new POST form will be distributed after July 1 as a web-based form on the Idaho Secretary of State’s health care directive registry web site (www.idsos.state.id.us/general/hcdr.htm). Licensed physicians and licensed health care facilities can access the form using a password-protected login, which may be requested by emailing the requestor’s name and license number to idahopost@dhw.idaho.gov.

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